

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 02725 202238Z

ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 OCS-06 CA-01 CCO-00 ANAE-00

MCT-02 SY-05 SYE-00 /067 W

-----016390 202255Z /61

Z 20120Z JUN 79 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 1432

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAUGA 2725

FOR NICARAGUA WORKING GROUP

E.O. 12065: GDS 6/20/85 (TUCKER, FRANK M., JR.) OR-M

TAGS: CDES, NU, CASC (STEWART, WILLIAM)

SUBJECT: (C) DEATH OF AMCIT WILLIAM STEWART, ABC STAFF CORR-
ESPONDENT

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. BILL STEWART, ABC STAFF CORRESPONDENT, ALONG WITH JACK CLARK, CAMERAMAN AND JIM CEFALO, TECHNICIAN AND TWO NICARAGUANS, ONE A TRANSLATOR AND ONE A DRIVER, ENTERED A BARRIO IN EASTERN MANAGUA AROUND 10:00 A.M. THIS MORNING, JUNE 20, TO PHOTOGRAPH SOME OF THE ACTION THERE. THE BARRIO, RIGUERO, HAS BEEN AN AREA OF HEAVY FIGHTING OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS. THE REPORTERS WERE VERY NERVOUS BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN SHOT AT BY THE GUARDIA THE PREVIOUS DAY SO THEY WERE PROCEEDING WITH UNUSUAL CAUTION. AFTER ENTERING THE BARRIO THEY CAME TO A GUARDIA CHECKPOINT AND WERE TOLD THAT THEY COULD NOT PROCEED. THEY EXPLAINED THAT THEY WERE THERE SIMPLY TO PHOTOGRAPH, AND THAT THEY WERE JOURNALISTS. AFTER AN EXCHANGE OF RADIO CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE GUARDIA AT THATPOST AND PERHAPS THEIR HEADQUARTERS (UNKNOWN) THEY WERE ALLOWED TO PASS THE CHECKPOINT AND BEGAN PHOTOGRAPHING. THE GUARDIA OF THAT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MANAGU 02725 202238Z

CHECKPOINT PROVED TO BE VERY COOPERATIVE; SOME GUARDIA WERE EVEN PLAYING GUITARS. MOST OF THIS APPARENTLY WAS TO SHOW THAT THE MORALE OF THE GUARDIA THERE WAS HIGH, ACCORDING TO CEFALO.

3. AFTER FINISHING THEIR WORK AT THE FIRST CHECKPOINT THE MEN THEN MOVED DEEPER INTO THE BARRIO. AT THIS POINT THE MEN DECIDED IT WOULD BE BETTER TO GO ON

FOOT AND SO STEWART AND THE INTERPRETOR LEFT THE VEHICLE WHILE THE OTHERS REMAINED INSIDE. THEY BEGAN WALKING DOWN THE STREET TOWARD A SINGLE GUARDIA WHO WAS STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET. THERE WAS SOME CONFUSION AS TO HOW MANY GUARDIA WERE IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY BUT IT SEEMS THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL MORE LOUNGING AROUND ON THE PORCHES OR FRONT STEPS OF A COUPLE OF NEARBY HOUSES. THE GUARDIA IN THE STREET MOTIONED FOR THE TWO MEN TO STOP AND THE INTERPRETER THEN MOVED AHEAD OF STEWART AND THEY BEGAN WALKING SLOWLY WITH THEIR HANDS UP IN THE AIR. AGAIN, SOME CONFUSION BUT THE INTERPRETER APPARENTLY WAS EITHER ESCORTED OFF OR CALLED TO THE SIDE OF THE STREET BY SOME OF THE OTHER GUARDIA STANDING AROUND IN THE AREA. AT ANY RATE, HE BECAME SEPARATED FROM STEWART AT THAT POINT. STEWART CONTINUED FORWARD SLOWLY WITH HIS HANDS UP IN THE AIR. STEWART AND CLARK REMAINED IN THE VEHICLE GETTING THEIR EQUIPMENT TOGETHER AND KEEPING AN EYE ON WHAT WAS HAPPENING. CLARK APPARENTLY WAS RECORDING THIS ON CAMERA. STEWART FINALLY APPROACHED THE GUARDIA AND THE MEN SAW HIM GOING DOWN ON HIS KNEES WITH HIS HANDS STILL UP IN THE AIR. IT APPEARED THAT A CONVERSATION WAS TAKING PLACE, BUT STEWART DID NOT SPEAK SPANISH AND THE GUARDIA APPARENTLY DID NOT SPEAK ENGLISH. CEFALO SAYS THAT STEWART WAS ABOUT FIFTY YARDS FROM THE VEHICLE WHEN THIS HAPPENED. THE DRIVER SAYS THAT THEY WERE ABOUT 110 YARDS FROM THE VEHICLE. CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MANAGU 02725 202238Z

THE MEN THEN SAW STEWART LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND FACE DOWN WITH HIS ARMS STILL STRETCHED OUT. THE GUARDIA APPEARED TO BE GIVING HIM SOME TYPE OF INSTRUCTIONS. THE GUARDIA MOVED FORWARD AND KICKED HIM IN THE SIDE ONCE, THEN STEPPED BACK. STEWART THEN APPEARED TO BE MOVING TO PUT HIS HANDS BEHIND HIS HEAD AND THE GUARDIA SHOT HIM, THE SHOT ENTERING THE SIDE OF THE HEAD NEAR THE BACK. CLARK SAW THIS THROUGH THE VIEW FINDER OF HIS CAMERA, SAW THE HEAD BOUNCE BUT NEITHER MAN RELEASED WHAT HAD HAPPENED BECAUSE THERE WERE OTHER SHOTS IN THE AREA AS WELL. WHEN IT FINALLY BECAME CLEAR THAT STEWART WAS NOT MOVING AND THAT HE HAD BEEN SHOT, THE MEN NATURALLY BECAME AFRAID AND TOLD THE DRIVER TO TURN THE CAR AROUND AND GET OUT OF THERE. THE DRIVER RESISTED, SAYING THAT THEY WOULD BE SHOT IF THEY TRIED TO LEAVE AND REFUSED TO MOVE THE TRUCK EVEN THOUGH THE GUARDIA WHO HAD SHOT STEWART WAS MOTIONING FOR THEM TO LEAVE. AFTER A COUPLE OF MINUTES THE GUARDIA THEN MOTIONED FOR THEM TO MOVE FORWARD AND THE TRUCK WAS MOVED UP TO THE SPOT WHERE STEWART WAS KILLED. THE MEN ALL GOT OUT OF THE TRUCK UPON ORDERS FROM THE GUARDIA. BY THIS TIME OTHER GUARDIA MEMBERS HAD JOINED THE GROUP. THE GUARDIA

WHO HAD SHOT STEWART SPOKE TO THE DRIVER BECAUSE NEITHER
CEFALO NOR CLARK SPOKE SPANISH. HE ASKED WHO WAS THE
SON-OF-A-BITCH ON THE GROUND, MEANING STEWART. THE
DRIVER SAID HE WAS A REPORTER AND THAT THE OTHER TWO
WERE REPORTERS AS WELL AND IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AND THE
OTHER NICARAUGAN. THERE IS SOME CONFUSION AS TO WHAT
OCCURRED IN THE CONVERSATION, BUT THE GIST OF IT IS THAT
THE GUARDIA SAID THAT THE REPORTERS WERE AGAINST THEM.
THE DRIVER RESPONDED THAT THEY WERE NOT AGAINST THEM,
THAT THEY ACTUALLY WORKED FOR CHANNEL 5 (SOMOZA'S
TELEVISION STATION) WHICH WAS, OF COURSE, UNTRUE. THE
SEVERAL GUARDIA THEN DISCUSSED WHETHER THEY SHOULD KILL THEM
ALL SO THAT THERE WOULD BE NO WITNESSES AND THE DRIVER
SAID THAT HE TOLD THEM THAT THEY WOULD SIMPLY SAY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MANAGU 02725 202238Z

THAT THE MAN HAD BEEN KILLED BY THE SANDINISTAS. AFTER
A LITTLE MORE DISCUSSION THE GUARDIA TOLD THEM THAT THEY
COULD GO. THEY ASKED IF THEY COULD TAKE BILL'S BODY WITH
THEM. THE GUARDIA SAID YES. DURING THIS DISCUSSION
THE 3 MEN NOTICED THE BODY OF THE INTERPRETER LYING
OFF TO THE SIDE NEAR ONE OF THE BUILDINGS. NO ONE
HAD SEEN HIM KILLED BUT THEY HAD HEARD SEVERAL SHOTS
FROM THAT GENERAL VICINITY DURING THE FEW MINUTES
PREVIOUS. THE DRIVER THINKS HE WAS SHOT AFTER STEWART
WAS KILLED. CEFALO AND CLARK THINK THAT HE WAS KILLED
BEFORE. WHILE THE GUARDIA HAD BEEN QUESTIONING THE
THREE MEN ABOUT THEIR IDENTITIES, ONE OF THEM HAD
REMARKED THAT HE KNEW THE INTERPRETER AND THAT HE HAD
WORKED AS A BELLHOP (?) AT THE AIRPORT. FOR SOME
REASON, THE GUARDIA SEEMED TO FEEL THAT THIS IMPLICATED HIM
SOMEHOW WITH THE SANDINISTAS. THE 3 REMAINING MEN
(CEFALO, CLARK AND THE DRIVER) THEN RETURNED TO THE
INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL WITH THE BODY. THE DRIVER
SAYS THAT THE GUARDIA WHO SHOT STEWART WAS A PRIVATE
AND THAT HE SAW NO OFFICERS ANYWHERE.

4. NOTIFICATION OF NEXT OF KIN: ABC HAS TAKEN
RESPONSIBILITY OF NOTIFYING NOK.
TUCKER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 jun 1979
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1979MANAGU02725
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS 19850620 TUCKER, FRANK M JR
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D790280-0112
Format: TEL
From: MANAGUA OR-M
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 may 2006
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2617559
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: (C) DEATH OF AMCIT WILLIAM STEWART, ABC STAFF CORR- ESPONDENT
TAGS: CDES, CASC, NU, (STEWART, WILLIAM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e6bb8a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014